



## Who Controls the Purse? Coin and Purse Activity

Students will play a quick game to help them understand the phrases “power of the purse” and “purse strings” and the concept of whoever holds the purse controls money decisions. The game compares individual decisions with group decisions by collective representation.

Before class, gather a single “purse” and enough “coins” (play money or tokens) for each student to have 5 coins to start the game.

Have each student pay a 1-coin tax into the purse from their original 5 coins. Collect a 1-coin tax for each round. **\*Special Note:** Keep a running record on the tally sheet of how much money is left in the purse for each round or ask a student to do so. Be sure to fill in “Initial Number of Coins in Purse for Round 1” before the game begins.

Then, for Round 1, have students “pass the purse” from person to person while you play a song. Suddenly stop the song after a brief period. Whoever is holding the purse when the music stops will decide how to spend money on an item from the personally beneficial “Silly Individual Decisions & Costs” (see later page in worksheet). The student won’t take any input from the class and will be the sole decisionmaker.

Deduct the cost of the decision on the tally sheet. Collect a new tax from students for Round 2. As shown on the sheet, 3 rounds will be done as an Individual Decision and 2 rounds will be voted on as a Group Decision. Use the “Silly Group Decisions & Costs” (on later page in this worksheet) for the latter. For each round, whatever money is in the purse is available for use.

When the final round has been completed, encourage students to consider how they felt when one person got to personally pick what to buy with the tax money and how different they felt when everyone had a vote.

# Running Tally Sheet

<b>Initial Number of Coins in Purse for Round 1</b>	
Round 1 Spending (Individual Decision)	
Remaining Coins in Purse After Round 1	
Coins Collected for Round 2	
<b>Total Coins to Start Round 2</b>	
Round 2 Spending (Individual Decision)	
Remaining Coins in Purse After Round 2	
Coins Collected for Round 3	
<b>Total Coins to Start Round 3</b>	
Round 3 Spending (Individual Decision)	
Remaining Coins in Purse After Round 3	
Coins Collected for Round 4	
<b>Total Coins to Start Round 4</b>	
Round 4 Spending (Group Decision)	
Remaining Coins in Purse After Round 4	
Coins Collected for Round 5	
<b>Total Coins to Start Round 5</b>	

Round 5 Spending (Group Decision)	
Remaining Coins in Purse After Round 5	

# Spending Decision Lists

## Silly Individual Decisions & Costs

1. A personal army of squirrels trained to bring me snacks and chase away homework. **(Cost: 5 coins)**
2. Shoes that make me instantly moonwalk everywhere and play sound effects when I walk. **(Cost: 5 coins)**
3. A lifetime supply of rainbow-colored slime stored in a secret underground slime vault. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
4. A private roller coaster that runs from my house to school and back again. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
5. A throne made of marshmallows that never melts and comes with a built-in soda fountain. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
6. A golden llama chauffeur to carry me to school every day wearing sunglasses. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
7. A personal pizza-delivering robot that follows me everywhere playing my theme song. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
8. A holographic clone of myself to go to school so I can stay home and nap. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
9. A jetpack-powered backpack so I can zoom past traffic and land right in my classroom. **(Cost: 20 coins)**
10. A pet dragon that makes toast and guards my room from siblings. **(Cost: 20 coins)**

## Silly Group Decisions & Costs

1. A giant bouncy castle classroom where every desk is a trampoline. **(Cost: 5 coins)**
2. An ice cream waterfall in the back of the room that never runs out of sprinkles. **(Cost: 5 coins)**
3. A class pet T. rex that eats the cafeteria food that no one wants and does tricks after school on the playground. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
4. A robot teacher assistant that gives out unlimited stickers and tells dad jokes. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
5. A self-refilling nacho cheese fountain in the cafeteria just for our class. **(Cost: 10 coins)**
6. A pool with floating desks so students can go swimming during class. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
7. A petting zoo of unicorns stationed outside the school entrance every Friday. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
8. An unlimited field trip travel pass to whatever location the class chooses. **(Cost: 15 coins)**
9. A roller-coaster homework delivery system that zooms assignments straight to the teacher's desk. **(Cost: 20 coins)**
10. An invisible homework machine that does all assignments and launches them with fireworks when turned in. **(Cost: 20 coins)**